

Homeless

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/23165611) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/23165611>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	The Avengers (Marvel Movies) , Marvel Cinematic Universe , Spider-Man (Tom Holland Movies)
Relationship:	Peter Parker & Tony Stark
Character:	Peter Parker , Tony Stark , May Parker
Additional Tags:	Homeless Peter Parker , Hurt Peter Parker , Protective Tony Stark , Peter Parker Needs a Hug , IronDad Bingo 2019
Series:	Part 9 of IronDad Bingo 2019
Collections:	The Best IronDad/Spiderson Fics , The Best Peter Parker Whump Fics
Stats:	Published: 2020-03-16 Words: 4851

Homeless

by [Emily_F6](#)

Summary

"Don't you dare tell him." That's what May had said. And Peter does his best to honor that, no matter how bad things get.

"Don't you dare tell him." The words were said with a sob, tears dripping down May's cheeks as she dropped onto the sofa that they would have to leave behind. "Don't...". Her words caught and he sat down beside her, wrapping an arm around her shoulders and fighting his own tears. Peter and his aunt sat on her bed, her face hidden in his chest. "Please...we...we'll be fine. Just..."

"I won't." Peter promised, knowing exactly who she was talking about. Knowing that she was ashamed and devastated and afraid and that he had to take care of her. Uncle Ben was gone. Had been gone for two years now. And yeah, he had Mr. Stark too. The man had had him over a few times since the whole Homecoming fiasco a few months ago, mostly for suit repairs and the occasional lecture about being careful. And Peter appreciated it. Really. No, the man hadn't exactly been very 'hands-on' about the whole mentorship thing, but he had seen the man a few times. Gotten a few phone calls. Mr. Stark had always been nice...but Peter had to take care of his aunt. It was up to him.

And he'd failed.

Thankfully it was the first week of summer. He wouldn't have to worry about the school noticing anything...wouldn't have to worry about anyone asking any questions. His brain was already humming...already working toward a plan. Maybe he could shower at Ned's. Or sleep there if his mom didn't notice. He was sure that May could find a friend to stay with...and there was always the

shelter. Either way, he had to come up with a plan. Had to figure out how to fix this. No matter what May said.

It had been coming for weeks. Overdue rent notices and bills with large red stamps that she tried to hide from Peter. He had never asked her anything about them...he knew that she didn't want to talk about it. So he'd kept quiet. Averted his eyes, like he was ashamed. And he was. Not of May, of course...of himself. Of the situation. He could have gotten a part time job. Never mind the fact that May had forbidden it, especially after finding out about Spiderman.

And then the eviction notice.

"I won't tell him. I promise." He whispered, dropping his chin on her hair, jaw tight, eyes hot. He wouldn't. Probably wouldn't have the chance anyway.

May sold what she could. Pawned her jewelry and Peter tried to give her his computer, but she wouldn't hear of it. "You need that for school." She told him, touching his cheek, eyes full of tears as the two stood together in the middle of the now-empty living room. Peter spent that last week in their apartment living in fear that someone would stop by and see it...that someone would find out. Ned was on vacation with his parents for the first two weeks of summer, so he didn't have to worry about that.

Still, despite the fact that Mr. Stark had been to his apartment exactly one time, and only for a few minutes to recruit him, he was terrified that the man would stop by. That he would show up at their front door, knocking and then looking around their empty living room and Peter would have to think of some excuse for why they didn't have a sofa or a TV or...or anything anymore. All that was left were their beds and whatever food was in their fridge. That was it. And at night, as Peter slept in his empty room, clothes already stored in May's car or his backpack, he had nightmares about it. Terrible dreams. Dreams where Mr. Stark stood in their living room and looked at him in absolute disbelief.

"How could you let this happen?"

Other nights it was Ben. Different father figure. Sam question.

"How could you let this happen?"

And then he would wake up in a cold sweat, tears in his eyes as he looked around at the empty room that would only be his bedroom for a few more days.

May didn't cry when she left the keys in the apartment that was no longer theirs. She didn't cry when she pulled up the handle of her suitcase, rolling it behind her, Peter at her heels as the two of them made their way to the elevator. Then down to the ground floor. She didn't cry until they had placed their luggage in the trunk, the two of them sitting in the front seat, parked on the street...and then she put her head in her hands, sobbing, forehead resting on the steering wheel of their new home.

Peter reached out, touching her shoulder, and she turned in her seat, arms out, yanking him towards her. "I'm sorry." He whispered, gripping the back of her shirt, sobbing into her shoulder and praying that no one saw them. That no one knew. "I'm so sorry."

"This wasn't your fault, baby. None of it was your fault. We're going to be okay. I promise. I promise, baby. We'll be okay."

They spent the first night in the car, parked in a local park, Peter in the back seat and May in the

front. He heard her sobbing as he curled up in the back, face hidden in the pillow he'd brought from his bed and crying as quietly as he could. He hadn't gone out as Spiderman since finding out that they were being evicted, and he was afraid that Mr. Stark would notice. Afraid that the man would call and ask him why he was patrolling. Why he wasn't taking advantage of his summer vacation.

After three nights, they woke to a cop knocking on their window, shining a flashlight into their car at 3 in the morning, suggesting that they find another parking spot...May cried again as she drove around the park, finally pulling over as she sobbed into the steering wheel.

That was the first time he thought about calling Mr. Stark.

The man hadn't been much more present in his life since Homecoming. But Peter was certain that he would help. That he would take one look at May, sobbing in her car, and he would probably buy them an apartment complex. Give May a job at Stark industries doing something easy like sitting at a desk and pay her \$100/hr and he'd take one look at Peter and order him a pizza and offer to let him stay. He'd offered once before, one day when Peter had showed up for suit repairs and had tried to hide a stab wound. Mr. Stark had taken one look at the suit and the rip in the torso and had turned to Peter, arms crossed. "Take your shirt off." He had ordered, and Peter had nearly spit out the Yoohoo Mr. Stark had given him.

"What?"

"Shirt. Off."

It had taken Peter a moment of looking from the suit to Mr. Stark to get it. "Oh...it's fine, Mr. Stark. Really...it barely nicked me..."

"Shirt. Off." He had ordered again, and Peter had sighed, taking another long drink of his chocolate drink, then peeling off his shirt, letting his man see the still-fresh wound on his torso. "Shit, kid." He had grabbed a first aid kit, gesturing for Peter to sit down in a chair, and he had, letting Mr. Stark disinfect the already-healing stab wound. "You look beat, kid. You want to stay?"

"Huh?" Peter had asked, head jerking up.

"You want to stay? At the tower? For the night. I've got plenty of spare rooms." He'd said, nonchalant. And Peter had been tempted. But he'd still remembered how it had felt before...how Happy had dodged his calls. How Mr. Stark hadn't been there. And he'd shaken his head, smiling and backing away a little. Trying not to let the man know that he was afraid...afraid of getting too close and afraid of letting him in and...just afraid.

"Thanks, Mr. Stark, but May's expecting me home tonight."

The man had given him a long look, lips pressed into a forced smile, and then he'd nodded. "Sure thing, Pete. Let me know if that starts to get infected." And that had been that.

It was close to impossible to get a spot in any of the local shelters. Especially with two of them. So Peter insisted that May take the spot, telling her that he was staying with Ned. A few times, he did. Ned didn't ask any questions when Peter asked to stay over...didn't ask questions about the fact that Peter ate more than usual or the fact that he always took a shower. Peter knew that Ned suspected. He knew that he was suspicious. But Ned never asked any questions and he was grateful. He even offered to let Peter stay over more, which made it easier for May to get spots at the shelter.

May saved every penny she could from her new job at the nursing home, and her job at McDonalds

meant they got lots of free food over the weekend. On nights when they stayed at the shelter, he usually got breakfast. Finally, three weeks after they lost their house, he backed up his computer on a hard drive that Ned lent him, then sold it.

May cried again when she found out, and Peter wondered if he would ever do anything right.

Tony contacted him exactly a month after they lost their apartment.

Peter was at Mr. Delmar's shop, spending an inordinate amount of time choosing between the apple, which would maybe keep him full longer, and the little package of donuts, which would be delicious, when his cell vibrated in his pocket.

He'd been thinking about stealing the donuts, and the thought made his heart stutter. But he hadn't eaten in hours, and he couldn't bear to tell May how much his stomach hurt. How his stomach twisted with stomach pangs at night when he tried to sleep. How he hadn't gone out as Spiderman in weeks because he wasn't sure he was strong enough to swing for hours without passing out anymore. Most days he spent at the library, reading or using their computers, or napping in alleys when he got too tired. He couldn't sleep in the library and he couldn't sleep in the park, but sometimes he could find a quiet place in an alley behind a dumpster where no one could bother him.

Ducking back behind the shelf full of chips and travel sized shampoos and soaps, he held the phone to his ear, clearing his throat before answering. "Hello?" He answered, hesitant.

"Hey, Pete. How's it going?"

"Um...fine, Mr. Stark. How...how are you?"

"I'm fine, kid. I was wondering if you wanted to stop by the tower today. I had some updates I wanted to install...think you could swing over?"

"Yeah...um...yeah, I can do that. Right...right now?" He clarified, mind racing.

Maybe Mr. Stark would have some food for him. Maybe he could lay down, just for a second. Maybe the man would let him stay over.

Eyes hot, he shook the thought off. Mr. Stark wasn't responsible for him. It wasn't his job to do that...but maybe...maybe he would offer him a real internship! Or maybe he could join the Avengers! Did that pay well? Then he could take care of May.

"Pete? You with me, bud?"

"Oh...yeah...I'm sorry, Mr. Stark. Um, what did you, uh...what did you say?"

"I said you can come on over. You okay?"

"Yeah. I'm fine. I'm on my way."

Peter changed into the suit, stuffing his clothes into his backpack, which was getting rattier and rattier, and, sniffing under the suit to make sure he smelled okay, then spraying himself with body spray, he headed to the tower. It was harder than he remembered...his arms ached and his head swam. He could hear the people below calling out to him...shouts of 'Spiderman' and 'he's back' and other things he just barely heard...he couldn't help them. He couldn't help May and he couldn't help himself because fifteen year olds couldn't get jobs without their guardian's permission. But he'd be sixteen in August...then he could get a job. He could help. Unless, by some miracle, Mr.

Stark was able to help him without finding out. But Peter couldn't tell him. He'd promised May. Promised her. So he wouldn't tell Mr. Stark. He'd just...hope the man would offer him an internship or something. A paid one.

Peter shook his head at himself as he landed on the side of the building. It was a stupid thought. Something a little kid would think. He had to be better than that now. For May. Crawling up to the window that would lead him to the living room, he ignored the fact that his hands were shaking, tapping his fingers against the glass until the window flew open.

"The hell, kid." Mr. Stark asked, rolling his eyes as Peter landed in the room, pulling his mask off and grinning a little. "When I invited you over, I thought you might use the front door." The man didn't look upset, despite his words. More teasing, and Peter smiled, feeling relief fill him. Mr. Stark wasn't angry. He hadn't let down yet another person...first Ben, then May...Mr. Stark wasn't angry.

He was so tired...why didn't his thoughts make sense anymore? Because he was tired? Hungry? Something else?"

"I figured the window would be faster." Peter joked, words dying in his throat when he saw Mr. Stark's expression. Worry. Mr. Stark was staring at him with what had to be worry. "Sir?"

"You okay, Pete?"

"What? Yeah...yeah, I'm good." He nodded, taking a half step away from the man who seemed to be regarding him a little too carefully. Too closely.

"You sure?" Peter nodded once more, smiling as cheerfully as he could manage, and Mr. Stark let it go. At least, he seemed to. Peter knew that he didn't look great. He'd seen it in the mirror at Ned's a few days ago. He had sunken cheekbones and was too pale, and bluish bags darkened under his eyes, becoming more prominent every day. His friend had been looking at him strangely that evening. So despite the fact that he'd been invited to stay another night, Peter had turned him down, telling May to take a spot at the shelter and telling her that he'd be at Ned's again.

Instead, he'd slept in an alley, curled up in an old hoodie, head resting against a wall, his backpack between him and a dumpster. The smell had been awful, and he'd woken up every few hours from hunger or strange noises. His head ached and his stomach cramped and it was in that dazed, tired, hungry state that he'd found himself in Mr. Delmar's shop. And now he was in the tower. And Mr. Stark was staring at him. "Yeah." He assured the man. "Yeah, I'm fine."

To Peter's horror, the man started to reach out a hand to his forehead, and Peter flinched back, embarrassed as soon as he did it. Mr. Stark froze, looking more concerned than before. "I was just going to make sure you didn't have a fever, kid." He told him, dropping his voice. Peter was glad that they were alone. Glad that no one was around to see how dumb he was being. Of course that was all he was doing. What else would he be doing?

Over the last few weeks, he'd gone to sleep alone in alleys, waking to strangers hands reaching for him. For his backpack. For his face. Every time, he'd woken and gotten away before they'd been able to touch him. But every time he woke, he felt heavier and heavier. More and more exhausted. He worried that one day he wouldn't be fast enough.

Peter forced himself to stay still when Mr. Stark placed the back of his hand against his forehead. It was strange. An odd sensation. No one had touched him in a long time. Even May...she'd been so busy. So harried and exhausted...it felt like she didn't even see him anymore, and he felt his eyes heat up. Dropping his eyes, he swallowed. "I'm fine." He whispered as he fought the urge to press

his head into the man's hand.

"You feel kind of warm, Pete." The man muttered, dropping his hand and staring worriedly at him. Unfortunately, his head was starting to swim, and he felt his knees start to buckle. "Peter!" The man gripped his upper arm, keeping him upright. "Hey...talk to me, kid. What's wrong?"

"Sorry, just, uh...didn't sleep very well." It wasn't a lie, and he forced a smile, shrugging. "Kind of tired."

"Here." The man led him over to the sofa, urging him to sit down. "You want something to drink? We can work on your suit later. Or I can give you a ride home." The panic came so quickly that Peter couldn't hide it for a second, and he dropped his eyes, swallowing hard. "What's going on, kid?"

"Nothing. We can go ahead and work on those suit upgrades."

"Why don't you take it easy for a second, Pete?" Mr. Stark disappeared for a second, then returned with a soda in hand. He handed it to Peter who took it, then sat down beside him.

"I'm fine, Mr. Stark, really."

"Okay." The man nodded, not moving from where he'd sat beside him. "There was actually something I'd meant to ask you. I was looking at the logs last night and I saw that you hadn't been out as Spiderman for a couple of weeks." Peter swallowed hard, dropping his eyes once more, thoughts racing as he tried to think of an excuse. Any excuse.

"I...I was sick for a few days and...uh...May needed help around the house." It sounded lame even to his own ears. Stupid. Like an obvious lie, and from the way Mr. Stark was watching him, he wasn't fooling him. Not even a little.

"How's Aunt Hottie doing anyway?"

"I...she, uh...she's fine. Good." Peter nodded, making his voice cheerful. "Busy with work."

"Yeah? I think Happy was thinking about asking her to dinner." The look of shock and horror on Peter's face was so sudden that he couldn't stop it, and Mr. Stark laughed out loud. "What? Happy isn't so bad."

"No...he's...fine..." Peter muttered, shrugging. "Um...it's just..." Mr. Stark chuckled, patting him on the shoulder.

"Don't worry, Pete, I don't think he's planning to propose any time soon. But he mentioned that she hadn't been answering her phone." Peter swallowed hard.

"Oh...I think...I think she's just been busy."

"Yeah? Think she could take a night off? Pep's been asking me to have you both over for dinner sometimes."

"She's...she's been really busy with work."

Mr. Stark was watching him. Frowning. Looking worried. "Yeah? Doesn't she work at the hospital?"

"I...not anymore. She works at a nursing home now." Mr. Stark didn't answer, but he was still

staring.

"Pete?" He asked after a moment, voice lower than before. "What's going on, kid?"

His eyes were getting hot and he dropped them, blinking hard before he cry. "Nothing." He whispered, hating the way his voice cracked.

"Peter." It wasn't a question...the man's hand touched his shoulder and Peter couldn't remember the man ever being so nice...so gentle. "Come on, kid. Talk to me. What's going on?"

"Nothing." He insisted again.

"So I can drive you back to your apartment and ask May and she'd agree that everything is fine?" Peter nodded, refusing to meet his eyes. Refusing to let the tears fall because it was his fault. He didn't have any right to cry over this. He hadn't been able to help her. He'd failed Ben and he hadn't filled the man's shoes and taken care of her. "Okay. Let's go." Mr. Stark jumped to his feet, holding out a hand to Peter who ignored it. Peter didn't move. "Come on, kid. We can go back to your place. Wait for Aunt Hottie. Ask her how she's doing." He shook his head, lips pressed together. "Come on, Peter."

"I can't." He snapped, glaring down at the floor. Mr. Stark stayed where he was, arms crossing.

"Why not, Peter? What's going on." He asked, voice soft and urgent. He couldn't tell him. Couldn't say the words. May had begged...he couldn't break that promise. Not after he'd failed her so many times. "Pete..."

"I just can't, okay." He bit out, glaring at the floor.

"Why can't we go back to your apartment?" He sniffed, placing a hand tightly over his mouth, shaking his head. "Peter..." There was a hesitation, and then he leaned in. "What happened to your apartment, kid?" Peter shook his head. Felt his stomach turn. "Did you get evicted?" He couldn't answer. Felt too humiliated and sad and tired to answer. "Where are you staying, Pete?"

There was a long, terrible silence, and Peter could practically feel the man working it out. Could hear the cogs turning.

Then man's jaw dropped. "Oh my god, Peter! What were you thinking? How could you not..." He stared, and Peter couldn't take it.

"You don't get to fucking yell at me about this!" Peter exploded, uncomfortably aware of how the tears were falling down his cheeks as he jumped to his feet, ignoring the headrush. "You've never had to worry about money. It's in your stupid tag line! Genius *billionaire* playboy philanthropist." The man flinched as if he'd been struck, and Peter wanted to take it back. He wanted to apologize.

But he was also aware of May...how she would feel about this. Of his own exhaustion and sadness and embarrassment and the fact that the man had figured it out and there was nothing he could do about it. Turning away, he yanked his mask back on, then threw himself out of the open window.

Peter swung away from the tower, not paying much attention to where he was going or how he got there. Instead, he just swung, moving forward until he found himself on a rooftop, dropping to the flat surface of the roof and sitting. Well...practically collapsing. He was so tired. He placed his head in his hands, sighing softly as he took deep breaths and tried to plan out the rest of his day. Maybe he could ask Ned if he could stay over. He needed to eat something soon. Needed to find a place to crash that wasn't an alley and needed to turn sixteen so he could find a job and...he needed to fix this. Needed to somehow make enough money so that he could help May.

"You're right." The quiet voice didn't startled him. He'd heard the repulsors. Had heard the opening of the suit and the footsteps. Curling up into an even tighter ball, he stared out at the city, keeping the mask over his face to hide his red eyes. Slowly, the man approached. Peter didn't look up. "I had no right to yell at you. I know...I mean...I don't. I don't know. I couldn't."

The man sat down beside him on the roof, a hesitant hand landing on his back. He didn't flinch away this time. Didn't even breathe, and the hand squeezed his shoulder. "I'm sorry, Pete."

"Okay," He whispered, anger with the man evaporating, replaced instead with a bone-deep weariness and a sadness so complete that tears fell once more. And he was embarrassed because this was the guy who'd said he wanted to be his mentor and who had all but ignored him for so long and now he was finally there...finally close enough to prove himself...and he couldn't stop crying.

"It's not okay." Mr. Stark scooted closer, the arm wrapping around his shoulders, and Peter felt like he might lose it. Like his whole body would just shatter. But the man pulled him against his side and Peter felt his head drop, something heavy suddenly being shared. "Can you tell me what happened?"

"Her hours got cut." He whispered, as if he didn't speak too loudly, he wouldn't be breaking his promise to her. What did it matter? Mr. Stark would find everything out anyway. "And the bills were overdue and they cut the electricity." Peter swallowed hard, flinching when it scraped at his throat, sore from crying. "Then...we just...she lost her job and couldn't find another one that paid enough..."

"Does she have a job now?"

"She works at a nursing home 30 hours a week...and on the weekends she works at McDonald's. She's trying to save up for a security deposit but..." He trailed off, wondering what the man thought of them. Did he think they were irresponsible with their money? He thought of the new shoes she'd gotten him for Christmas and the computer they'd saved up for with a wave of shame. At least he'd managed to sell the computer.

"Where do you stay?"

"The shelter when there are open beds. Her car." He shrugged, as if it was no big deal. As if he wasn't ashamed. He couldn't say the alleys of New York. Couldn't tell the man that he'd been sleeping on the streets some nights.

"How long?" Mr. Stark asked, voice gentle and serious but not pitying.

"Since June 5th." He all but whispered, once more, staring at his lap. It was July 20th. The man brought a hand up to the back of his neck, gently slipping his fingers under the mask and pulling it off. Peter was crying, and he tried to hide his face, but Mr. Stark put a hand under his chin, urging him to look at him. "She made me promise not to tell you." Peter murmured, wiping a knuckle uselessly under his eye. It did nothing for the tears that kept falling.

Mr. Stark stared at him for a moment, lips pressed together. Eyes sad. "Alright, Pete. Why don't you come back to the tower and get some rest, huh? You look beat." Peter started to shake his head. To tell the man he was fine. But his whole body felt heavy and immovable, thoughts sluggish, so he just nodded. "When was the last time you ate?" He asked then, sounding a little more concerned.

"Breakfast." Peter told him. It wasn't a lie...he had had a banana for breakfast. The sun was high in the sky, though, and he'd been ignoring hunger pangs for hours.

Mr. Stark did something with his phone, then handed him his mask. "Alright, give me a second." He stepped backwards into the iron man suit, letting it form around him, then gave Peter a hand up. Before he could protest, the man scooped him into his arms as easily as if he were a child.

A smaller child.

Peter yanked his mask back on, then dropped his head against Mr. Stark's shoulder, not caring that the metal was cold on his cheek. The man jumped off the roof, thrusters engaged to slow their fall, and they landed lightly on the ground only to find a car waiting.

Happy was in the front seat, casting glances back at Peter as the boy leaned his head on Mr. Stark's shoulder. Silently, he started to drive, and in the back seat, Peter closed his eyes, wondering if he could just sleep for a moment. If he could just close his eyes and rest and let Mr. Stark take care of things. "I've got you, kid. Don't worry."

"It's my fault." He whispered, hoping that Happy didn't hear, but figuring there was nothing he could do even if he did.

"What?" Peter didn't lift his head, taking advantage of the man's comfort. And he knew he shouldn't. Knew that Mr. Stark was busy and important and that he had no right to monopolize his time like this.

But he needed help.

"It's my fault. I couldn't get a job or..."

"Kid, this isn't on you."

"But..."

"Pete, listen to me, kid." The man whispered, squeezing his shoulder. "This was not your fault. I know that. There's no way you could have prevented this."

"I was supposed to take care of her. After Ben..." He choked on his words, turning his face to Mr. Stark's shoulder, and the man rubbed his back.

"I know, buddy. But hey...you are. You're taking care of her by getting help. And that's what I'm here for. I'm going to help. So you just rest, okay? I'm going to take care of this."

And, closing his eyes, Peter knew that he would. So for the first time in weeks, he let himself rest.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!